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Testimony in support of Senate Bill 112, Dylan Steigers Protection of Youth Athletes Act
Presented to the Senate Judiciary Committee, Friday, February 1, 2013

Good morning Mr. Chairman and committee members. My name is James Driggers. I am the Chief of the Community Services Bureau within the Department of Public Health and Human Services. The Department strongly supports this legislation and we thank Senator Blewett for sponsoring it. This Bill will ensure that young Montana athletes, parents, coaches and medical providers are educated on recognizing a concussion and that athletes are removed from play and cleared by a medical provider before returning to play, to prevent secondary impact syndrome (which is a second or subsequent concussion), which can be life altering or even fatal.

As of 2012, 43 states have passed concussion legislation to protect young athletes, all specifying education, removal from play and medical clearance before return to play. By passing this law, Montana youth will be better protected from sustaining a catastrophic brain injury, with better awareness and standardized removal and return to play guidelines that are implemented consistently throughout Montana school-related sports activities. The Department will gladly work with other state agencies and partners to help develop the model policies this legislation specifies and to promote the adoption of these policies by schools. Mr. Chairman, committee members - thank you.